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Origin of Curing Ceremonies, The

White Mountain Apache

Anon

This is how ceremonies amoung us for the curing of sick people. Long, long ago, the earth was made. Then the One Who Made the Earth also planned for each person to have a piece of land that he could live on and call his own. Our people were living in one such place, but they didn't like that particular spot. SO the One WHo Made the Earth told them to move to a new Location, and when they did, they slept well, and liked it, and lived in a good way.

Then two men amoung them became sick and grew weaker day by day. The people didn't do anything for them because no one knew then about illnesses and how to cure them. The One Who Made the Earth said, "Why don't you do something for these two men? Why don't you say some words over them?" But the people had no knowledge of curing ceremonies.

Four men amoung the people happened to be standing, one to the East, one to the south, one to the west and one to the north. The One WHo Made the Earth spoke to one of these men, telling him, "Everything on earth has power to cure all these things." Now this man understood that knowledge was available. Then those four stood there. On the first night, the one standing on the east side began to chant a set prayer all by himself. On the second night, the one on the south started to drum and sing lightning songs. On the third night, the one on the west chanted a set prayer. On the fourth night, the one on the north began to drum and sing lightnning songs. They did not conceieve this pattern in their own minds; it was bestowed upon them by the One Who Made the Earth. It was as if the knowledge of what they should chant or sing had suddenly been transmitted to them from outside.

Then the One who made the Earth said to these four, "Why don't you go to the two sick men and say some words over them and make them well?" So those four went to where the two sick men were and worked over them, and they were cured. From that time on, we had curing ceremonies and knowledge of the different kinds of sickness that may be caused by various things. That's the way all curing ceremonies started.

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